

## BOOK REVIEW

ADAM CROSS. 2012. **Aldrovanda: The Waterwheel Plant.** (ISBN: 978-1-908787-04-0, cloth). Redfern Natural History Productions, 61 Lake Drive, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH15 4LR, ENGLAND, U.K. (**Orders:** [www.redfernnaturalhistory.com](http://www.redfernnaturalhistory.com), [sales@redfernnaturalhistory.com](mailto:sales@redfernnaturalhistory.com), +44 1202 686585). \$29.72, 249 pp., 93 color photos, 6" × 9".

Most of us who have been around for a while probably grew up with the old adage, "You can't judge a book by its cover!" This reviewer says, "Oh, yes you can!—At least, a lot of the time!"

I was totally fascinated by the cover of this beautiful volume when I first saw it. Even more exciting, as I first thumbed through the pages, were the many color photographs and the careful, well-researched history of this unusual, one-of-a-kind plant.

Best of all, however, the author has provided us with an incredibly fascinating and carefully researched account of this monotypic genus and its only species, *Aldrovanda vesiculosa*, a Tertiary relict with an ancient lineage dating back "tens of millions of years." Cross has not only researched all the ancient information, he has provided a thorough presentation of Paleo-History; Morphology, Physiology and Ecology; and Habitat and Distribution, including all the continents in which *Aldrovanda* was and now is found. He also identifies areas where populations of *Aldrovanda* are currently "introduced and artificial" and discusses population genetics; conservation status, protection and national listings; integrated conservation and management guidelines; and cultivation.

As the author points out, "Despite being widely regarded as one of the most difficult carnivorous plants to maintain in horticulture, *Aldrovanda* is not as capricious as its reputation might suggest." He also offers advice on how to proceed with *Aldrovanda*, including the nurturing, protecting, and dealing with "pests, diseases, and predators."

This is a very careful, very well-researched account of *Aldrovanda*. The history and work of many prominent botanists through the centuries is fascinating, and the volume is concise, to the point, thoroughly explained, beautifully illustrated, and very well documented. Most dedicated gardeners and curious, causal gardeners will enjoy "trying their hands" with this plant. (And the author does tell you specifically how to get started at home!)—Helen Jude, Volunteer & Associate Editor, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.